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ABSTRACT

The awareness of the effects of stress on school personnel and its effects on student achievement led to the formation of a committee to examine the problem and establish some objectives. A copy of the questionnaire submitted to the personnel of the Worchester, Massachusetts, Public Schools is presented. Job related factors were listed with responses to be checked on a scale ranging from no stress to high stress. Results of the survey appear in tabular form, giving the reactions of teachers, administrators, traveling teachers, aides, and clerical workers. Stress factors consistently rated as highest were: involuntary transfer, reduction in force, discipline, and salary. Comparison is made between this survey and similar surveys conducted in other school systems. Some actions being considered for the reduction of stress are discussed. (JD)

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Share & Exchange

A Newsletter for Teachers

OFFICE OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT • WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS • WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

VOL. 8, NO. 4 June, 1980

STRESS/BURNOUT REPORT

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SHARE AND EXCHANGE

James J. Collins and Barbara A. Masley
Editors

Eugene J. Appleb.aum
Supervisor of Special Programs

Barbara A. Boschert
Acting Director of Staff Development

WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
20 Irving Street
Worcester, Massachusetts 01609

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Worcester Public Schools

Worcester, Massachusetts

20 Irving Street
Worcester, Massachusetts 01609

Office of the Superintendent

Tel. 617 798-2521

John J. Connor
Superintendent

TO ALL PERSONNEL:

Stress related physical and mental health problems have reached epidemic proportions in our country. Its sometimes devastating effects are not confined to any particular cultural group or occupational category.

The Worcester School Department has long been concerned with the well-being of the members of our system. The Personnel and Staff Development Offices have been available to provide necessary assistance.

It now appears though that given the circumstances of the time we live in more must be done. Therefore, it is hoped that the important data contained in this report will provide a base upon which an even stronger and more viable support system can be built.

Sincerely yours,

John Connor
Superintendent of Schools

In New York City 2 out of every 3 teachers laid off one year expressed no interest in returning to the classroom.

In 1966 nine percent of teachers surveyed said that if they had it to do over again they would not go into education. By 1976 this figure had jumped to 19% and another 17.5% said they might also reconsider their occupational choice.

According to a recent National Association of Secondary School Principals' report nearly 10% of the nation's high school principals have resigned their jobs this year.

A national survey conducted by Learning Magazine showed that 93% of the teachers questioned had experienced feelings of burnout.

An NEA survey conducted in 1961 showed that 28% of the teachers had 20 or more years' experience. By 1976 this figure had dropped to 14%.

An NEA stress survey found teachers disillusioned and distraught as did similar surveys in Massachusetts, Chicago, New York State, Tacoma and Tampa.

Stress – the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it (Selye) or *the environmental conditions that require behavioral adjustment* (Benson) is a part of many occupations. Distress, stress overload, burnout seems to occur widely in the helping professions, particularly teaching.

Distress can manifest itself in many ways: high blood pressure, fatigue, overeating, irritability, hostility, aggression, apathy, depression, anxiety, headaches, insomnia and a sense of powerlessness and hopelessness. A professor at the School of Medicine of the University of California stated that 50 to 60 percent of all disorders, physical and psychological, in the United States are stress related. In fact, he thought 90% would be a closer estimate.

Students say that they learn best from teachers who are reasonable, relaxed, enthusiastic and interested in them. On the other hand, distressed individuals are often irritable, tense, depressed, humorless and self-absorbed. How you feel about your work affects how you do it. Job satisfaction affects classroom performance which, in turn, leads to better student achievement. Distress distorts thinking and perceptions of reality and can produce irrational behavior. It creates a negative educational climate in the schools.

Effective change takes place when people seek solutions to their problems and are intimately involved in the process. The awareness of the effects of stress on school personnel and its concomitant effects on students led to the voluntary formation of a committee in May, 1979 at a released day session to examine the problem and establish some objectives. A follow-up meeting was held with John Simoncini, Administrative Assistant for Governmental Relations, Robert Consolmagno, Director of Guidance, and Barbara A. Boschert, Acting Director of Staff Development. A third meeting led to the creation of the following questionnaire.

WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

STRESS/BURNOUT QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire was composed by a committee of Worcester educators. If it is felt that a program for dealing with stress/burnout is necessary the committee will initiate further action. Members of the committee will be responsible for tabulating the results and forwarding the information to all school department personnel. Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope, via the pony, to Jim Collins, Staff Development Office, 20 Irving Street by November 21, 1979.

PLEASE CHECK BELOW:

POSITION: Teacher _____ Administrator _____ Traveling Teacher _____

Non-Instructional: Aide _____ Clerical _____

AGE:

22-29 _____
30-39 _____
40-49 _____
50-59 _____
60+ _____

Sex: Male _____ Female _____

YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

1-3 _____
4-9 _____
10-20 _____
20+ _____

YEARS – WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1-3 _____
4-9 _____
10-20 _____
20+ _____

PART ONE

Please check Yes or No to the following questions:	Yes	No
Have you ever experienced job related stress?	___	___
Should the Worcester Public Schools have a continuing program to deal with stress?	___	___
Should the EAW be involved in such a program?	___	___
Should such a program be available to employee's families?	___	___
Should each school have its own program?	___	___

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, PLEASE CONTINUE ON REVERSE.

PART TWO

Please circle the intensity of stress caused by the following job related factors:

JOB FACTOR	STRESS EFFECT						
	None	Little		Moderate		High	
Involuntary transfer	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Threat of reduction in force	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lack of supplies	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Discipline	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Communication problems with students	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Communication problems with parents	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Communication problems with teachers	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Communication problems with administrators	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Public Image	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Violence	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Vandalism	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Little participation in decision-making	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Paperwork	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
School closings	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Feeling of isolation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Salary	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lack of supportive services							
Personal	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Professional	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Others:

_____

_____

_____

_____

PART THREE

What kinds of solutions would you suggest as viable ways to deal with stress/burnout? (e.g. "stress hotline," "psychological counseling," "support team, etc.)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you,
BURNOUT COMMITTEE

In October, 1979 over 2400 surveys were hand delivered to individual school sites with instructions that secretaries, aides, teachers and administrators in the building be given a form and return it via the pony or through the mail. Forty-eight percent of the population returned the survey to the Office of Staff Development. The largest group responding were the teachers who made up 71% (837) of the sample population.

The following tables give a breakdown of the responses given on the Survey Instrument. *Table One* gives a breakdown by population.

TABLE ONE

Population and Response Rates of Personnel
Personnel Employed by the Worcester Public Schools

CATEGORY	*POPULATION	SAMPLE POPULATION SURVEYS RETURNED	% OF RETURN
Teachers	1516	837	55.2
Administrators	128	76	59.3
Traveling Teachers	388	87	22.4
Aides	188	74	39.3
Clerical	207	102	49.2
TOTALS	2427	1176	48.4

*School System Summary Report
October, 1979

Thirty-two percent of the sample population responding indicated they were in the 30-39 age category. Forty percent of the teachers and 33% of the traveling teachers fell in this category.

The greatest percentage of administrators responding fell in the 40-49 and 50-59 age categories (41%, 41% respectively).

The greatest concentration of aides fell in the 40-49 age category (38%) and the greatest concentration of clerical people fell in the 50-59 age category (40%).

TABLE TWO

Age of Respondents by Category

CATEGORY	20 - 29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Overall Response	15%	32%	28%	20%	5%
Teachers	15%	40%	25%	16%	4%
Administrators	–	12%	41%	41%	6%
Traveling Teachers	30%	33%	24%	9%	4%
Aides	24%	18%	38%	17%	3%
Clerical	5%	6%	30%	40%	19%

Table Three indicates that the sample was made up of 61% females and 39% males. Of this total population, clerical people had the highest percentage of females and administrators had the highest percentage of males.

TABLE THREE

Sex of Respondents

CATEGORY	% OF FEMALES	% OF MALES
Overall Response	61%	39%
Teachers	55%	45%
Administrators	25%	75%
Traveling Teachers	75%	25%
Aides	89%	11%
Clerical	99%	1%

Forty percent of the sample respondents had experience of 10-20 years in the Worcester Public Schools. Administrators responding had worked the greatest number of years in the system (63% had 20+ years experience). Forty-seven percent of the teachers and 42% of the aides indicated they had worked between 10-20 years in the system; 50% of the traveling teachers had worked 4-9 years and 48% of the aides had 1-3 years experience in the system.

TABLE FOUR

Per Cent of Respondents by Years in the Worcester Public Schools
n = number of respondents indicating answer

CATEGORY	1-3 YEARS IN W.P.S.	4-9 YEARS IN W.P.S.	10-20 YEARS IN W.P.S.	20+ YEARS IN W.P.S.
Overall Response n = 1137	11%	30%	40%	18%
Teachers n = 813	8%	28%	47%	17%
Administrators n = 75	—	12%	25%	63%
Traveling Teachers n = 84	16%	50%	26%	8%
Aides n = 67	48%	39%	10%	3%
Clerical n = 98	19%	36%	42%	3%

Table Five indicates the yes responses to several questions asked on the questionnaire/survey. Overall, 90% of the respondents indicated they had experienced job-related stress. Eighty-eight percent thought that the Worcester Public Schools should have a program dealing with stress and 79% indicated that the EAW should be involved in such a program.

More than half of the teachers responding indicated this program should be available to employees' families.

Fifty-one percent of the teachers thought individual schools should have a program dealing with stress; however, only 24% of the administrators responded yes to that particular question.

TABLE FIVE

Per Cent of Questions Receiving the Response "YES" on the Survey Instrument
n = number of people answering question

QUESTIONS ASKED	PER CENT OF "YES" RESPONSES					
	OVERALL	TEACHERS	ADMINISTRATORS	TRAVEL TEACHERS	AIDES	CLERICAL
Have you ever experienced job related stress?	n = 1156 90%	n = 830 92%	n = 75 92%	n = 86 95%	n = 71 70%	n = 94 86%
Should W.P.S. have a continuing program to deal with stress?	n = 1115 88%	n = 804 91%	n = 76 87%	n = 84 92%	n = 69 74%	n = 82 74%
Should E.A.W. be involved in such a program?	n = 1079 79%	n = 781 82%	n = 71 80%	n = 83 81%	n = 63 56%	n = 81 61%
Should such a program be available to employees' families?	n = 1027 57%	n = 737 61%	n = 69 55%	n = 79 49%	n = 67 42%	n = 75 40%
Should each school have its own program?	n = 1039 48%	n = 747 51%	n = 67 24%	n = 80 35%	n = 68 50%	n = 77 61%

The stress committee listed a number of job factors on the survey and asked respondents to rate each item using the scale "0 = no stress to 6 = high stress." Two methods were used to analyze the ratings that respondents gave to the job factors listed.

1. Using the ratings for each job factor (0 = no stress to 6 = high stress), an overall mean was computed for each factor. For example "Discipline" was given an overall mean rating of 4.13. Then individual mean ratings by category were obtained. The categories used were: *Position, Sex, Experience* and *Age* (See Tables 6, 7, 8, 9).

2. Using the same ratings (0 = no stress to 6 = high stress) these ratings were then collapsed into two responses. Zero (0), 1, 2, 3 ratings were called *low* and 4, 5, 6 ratings were called *high*. When more than 50% of the respondents rated a job factor as *low*, it was called low and when more than 50% of the respondents rated a factor as high, it was called *high*. In the case of an equal response rate, the job factor was rated as *low*. (See Tables 6, 7, 8, 9).

The following is a listing of the job factors rated as "high" by more than 50% of the respondents in each category. The overall response is listed first.

($\bar{X}$ = mean rating)

OVERALL RATING	
Involuntary transfer	$\bar{X}$ = 4.41
Discipline	$\bar{X}$ = 4.13
Paperwork	$\bar{X}$ = 3.83
Salary	$\bar{X}$ = 3.75
Reduction in Force	$\bar{X}$ = 3.51
Communication with Administrators	$\bar{X}$ = 3.30

TEACHER RATING	
Involuntary transfer	$\bar{X}$ = 4.44
Discipline	$\bar{X}$ = 4.37
Paperwork	$\bar{X}$ = 3.85
Salary	$\bar{X}$ = 3.68
Reduction in Force	$\bar{X}$ = 3.63
Decision Making	$\bar{X}$ = 3.41
Vandalism	$\bar{X}$ = 3.41
Lack of Supportive (Professional) Services	$\bar{X}$ = 3.23
Communication with Administrators	$\bar{X}$ = 3.40

ADMINISTRATORS' RATING	
Involuntary transfer	$\bar{X}$ = 4.72
Paperwork	$\bar{X}$ = 3.98
Discipline	$\bar{X}$ = 3.59
Salary	$\bar{X}$ = 3.38
Reduction in Force	$\bar{X}$ = 3.34
Communication with Administrators	$\bar{X}$ = 3.21

TRAVELING TEACHERS' RATING	
Paperwork	$\bar{X}$ = 4.56
Involuntary transfer	$\bar{X}$ = 4.20
Salary	$\bar{X}$ = 3.62
Lack of Supportive (Professional) Services	$\bar{X}$ = 3.35
Discipline	$\bar{X}$ = 3.34
Communication with Administrators	$\bar{X}$ = 3.27
Communication with Teachers	$\bar{X}$ = 3.22

AIDES' RATING	
Salary	$\bar{X}$ = 4.27
Involuntary transfer	$\bar{X}$ = 3.[illegible]
Discipline	$\bar{X}$ = 3.82
Reduction in Force	$\bar{X}$ = 2.9[illegible]
Communication with Students	$\bar{X}$ = 2.74

CLERICAL RATING	
Salary	$\bar{X}$ = 4.50
Involuntary transfer	$\bar{X}$ = 4.30
Paperwork	$\bar{X}$ = 3.89
Reduction in Force	$\bar{X}$ = 3.03

There were several commonalities found in each category. A comparison of each job factor rating by Position can be found in *Table Six*. "Teacher" had the greatest number of high stressors.

TABLE SIX

(Overall and Individual Means; High and Low Ratings by Position)

	Involuntary Transfer	Reduction In Force	Supplies	Discipline	Communication With Students	Communication With Parents	Communication With Teachers	Communication With Administrators	Public Image	Violence	Vandalism	Decision Making	Paperwork	School Closing	Isolation	Salary	Lack of Supportive Services		TOTAL HIGH/LOW
																	Personal	Professional	
OVERALL MEAN	4.41	3.51	2.79	4.13	2.68	2.75	2.35	3.30	2.70	2.94	3.12	3.21	3.83	2.55	2.43	3.75	2.83	3.21	6H 12L
HIGH OR LOW	H	H	L	H	L	L	L	H	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	H	L	L	
TEACHER MEAN	4.44	3.63	2.87	4.37	2.00	2.83	2.26	3.40	2.77	3.19	3.41	3.41	3.85	2.69	2.39	3.68	2.81	3.23	9H 9L
HIGH OR LOW	H	H	L	H	L	L	L	H	L	L	H	H	H	L	L	H	L	H	
ADMINISTRATOR MEAN	4.72	3.34	2.56	3.59	2.58	3.02	3.06	3.21	2.97	3.08	3.16	2.82	3.98	2.79	2.64	3.38	2.98	3.24	6H 12L
HIGH OR LOW	H	H	L	H	L	L	L	H	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	H	L	L	
TRAVEL TEACHER MEAN	4.20	3.22	2.93	3.34	2.18	2.61	3.22	3.27	2.47	1.81	1.75	2.81	4.56	2.19	2.95	3.62	3.00	3.35	7H 11L
HIGH OR LOW	H	L	L	H	L	L	H	H	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	H	L	H	
AIDES MEAN	3.97	2.94	2.72	3.82	2.74	2.21	2.08	2.30	1.85	2.61	2.00	2.02	1.87	1.67	2.17	4.27	2.72	2.64	5H 6L
HIGH OR LOW	H	H	L	H	H	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	
CLERICAL MEAN	4.30	3.03	1.94	2.69	1.51	1.61	1.60	2.89	2.34	.84	1.59	2.63	3.89	1.65	2.14	4.50	2.79	3.24	4H 14L
HIGH OR LOW	H	H	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	H	L	L	

Over 63% of the sample responded to the open ended question asking for comments/solutions for dealing with stress/burnout.

Using the Overall Response, we have listed a few comments and solutions given by respondents elaborating on the six job factors contributing to high stress.

Regretfully, all of the statements could not be reproduced, so the writers have chosen statements that were substantiated by many of the respondents.

Involuntary Transfer

Comment:

"Involuntary transfer created an overwhelming degree of stress since the politics of it made any actions on my part so futile. How can you expect support from a system that so indiscriminately shifts people around?"

Solution:

"Voluntary temporary reassignments. Mandatory changing of school every five years to provide new challenges. When a school is closing and a new school is opening, more consideration should be given to each staff member."

RIF (Reduction in Force)

Comment:

"Threat of R.I.F."

Solutions:

"Due to R.I.F. possibilities – an in-house program to retrain teachers in other disciplines."

"Professional workshops with vocational advisory services where teachers can expand their career options and define their marketable skills."

Discipline

Comment:

"Frustrations over the ineffectiveness of public school systems mainly due to the lack of alternatives in handling discipline problems."

"The basic cause of stress on the high school level is frustration over the lack of consistent firmness on the part of the administration in dealing with students in matters of discipline."

Solutions:

"Non-serious students must be removed from the system and isolated from those who would learn if the schools are to prove their worth."

"Remove some of the basic instructional responsibilities that were once initiated in the home and place them on the parents' shoulders where they belong."

Salary

Comments:

"The greatest stress on teachers right now is caused by inflation."

Solution:

"Negotiations should be reopened for a cost of living adjustment."

Paperwork

Comments:

"In my field (Special Ed.) teachers have an inordinate amount of paperwork in addition to our regular duties. I haven't met a Special Ed. teacher yet that was satisfied with the paperwork jungle maze."

"Paperwork is by far the greatest cause of burnout. About 40-50% of my time is spent on paperwork."

Solutions:

"Additional clerical and support (aides) staff."

"More preparation time."

Communication with Administrators

Comments:

"Lack of communication and "back up" by administrators causes most stress."

"Too many decisions made by superiors with no opportunity for discussion of matters involving teachers. Administrators make teachers feel like robots with no feelings instead of treating them as a part of the organization."

"Lack of communication between administrators and clerks. Too much responsibility on the clerks' shoulders. Administrators are not aware of work and responsibility of the clerk and they do not want to be aware of it. There is not enough consideration given to dedicated clerks."

Solutions:

"Let the teachers have input – we are the core of teaching."

"Simply treat teachers with some degree of respect."

"Get administration out of the office to see the problems of the classroom."

"An opportunity to communicate with administrators in a non-threatening way."

Table Seven lists the responses of males and females to the job factors listed on the stress survey. Male respondents had a greater number of high responses to job factors than females. A comparison of mean ratings can be made by referring to the Table.

TABLE SEVEN

(Overall and Individual Means; High and Low Ratings by Sex)

	Involuntary Transfer	Reduction in Force	Supplies	Discipline	Communication With Students	Communication With Parents	Communication With Teachers	Communication With Administrators	Public Image	Violence	Vandalism	Decision Making	Paperwork	School Closing	Isolation	Salary	Lack of Supportive Services		TOTAL HIGH/LOW
																	Personal	Professional	
OVERALL MEAN	4.41	3.51	2.79	4.13	2.68	2.75	2.35	3.30	2.70	2.94	3.11	3.21	3.83	2.55	2.43	3.75	2.83	3.21	–
HIGH OR LOW	H	H	L	H	L	L	L	H	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	H	L	L	6H 12L
MALES MEAN	4.50	3.62	2.70	4.29	2.00	2.69	2.30	3.52	2.89	3.25	3.50	3.34	3.78	2.62	2.45	4.31	2.96	3.31	–
HIGH OR LOW	H	H	L	H	L	L	L	H	L	L	H	H	H	L	L	H	L	H	9H 9L
FEMALES MEAN	4.35	3.44	2.87	4.04	2.68	2.83	2.44	3.16	2.54	2.74	2.83	3.14	3.91	2.52	2.45	3.38	2.75	3.23	–
HIGH OR LOW	H	H	L	H	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	H	L	H	6H 12L

By referring to *Table Eight*, Ratings by Experience, the reader can compare the individual means and highs and lows given for each job factor by the number of years employed in the Worcester Public Schools.

Personnel with 10-20 years experience had the highest number of highs and generally the highest mean response per job factor.

TABLE EIGHT

(Overall and Individual Means; High and Low Ratings by Experience)

	Involuntary Transfer	Reduction in Force	Supplies	Discipline	Communication With Students	Communication With Parents	Communication With Teachers	Communication With Administrators	Public Image	Violence	Vandalism	Decision Making	Paperwork	School Closing	Isolation	Salary	Lack of Supportive Services		TOTAL HIGH/LOW
																	Personal	Professional	
OVERALL MEAN	4.41	3.51	2.79	4.13	2.68	2.75	2.35	3.30	2.70	2.94	3.11	3.21	3.83	2.55	2.43	3.75	2.83	3.21	–
HIGH OR LOW	H	H	L	H	L	L	L	H	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	H	L	L	6H 12L
1-3 YEARS MEAN	3.90	3.35	2.96	3.75	2.78	1.03	2.79	3.35	1.80	2.72	2.43	2.59	3.57	2.22	2.39	3.71	1.75	3.25	–
HIGH OR LOW	H	H	L	H	L	L	L	H	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	H	L	H	7H 11L
4-9 YEARS MEAN	4.02	3.41	2.84	4.14	2.61	2.72	2.53	3.25	2.38	2.73	2.76	3.05	3.79	2.52	2.40	3.29	2.64	3.03	–
HIGH OR LOW	H	H	L	H	L	L	L	H	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	L	L	L	5H 13L
10-20 YEARS MEAN	4.49	3.78	2.96	4.36	2.87	2.91	2.40	3.54	3.03	3.25	3.39	3.55	3.99	2.80	2.51	3.83	3.04	3.40	–
HIGH OR LOW	H	H	L	H	L	L	L	H	L	L	H	H	H	L	L	H	L	H	9H 9L
20+ YEARS MEAN	4.88	3.35	2.63	4.13	2.66	2.76	2.19	3.17	2.86	3.24	3.72	3.31	3.87	2.62	2.37	3.95	2.78	3.18	–
HIGH OR LOW	H	H	L	H	L	L	L	H	L	H	H	L	H	L	L	H	L	L	8H 10L

Table Nine indicates how respondents rated job factors according to their respective age. With the exception of Involuntary Transfer (age 50-59 gave it the highest mean rating), the age category 30-39 had the highest mean response rate per category and the greatest number of highs.

TABLE NINE

(Overall and Individual Means; High and Low Ratings by Age)

	Involuntary Transfer	Reduction in Force	Supplies	Discipline	Communication With Students	Communication With Parents	Communication With Teachers	Communication With Administrators	Public Image	Violence	Vandalism	Decision Making	Paperwork	School Closing	Isolation	Salary	Lack of Supportive Services: Personal	Lack of Supportive Services: Professional	TOTAL HIGH/LOW
OVERALL MEAN	4.41	3.51	2.79	4.13	2.68	2.75	2.35	3.30	2.70	2.94	3.11	3.21	3.83	2.55	2.43	3.75	2.83	3.21	
HIGH OR LOW	H	H	L	H	L	L	L	H	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	H	L	L	6H 12L
AGE 22-29 MEAN	4.21	3.31	2.74	3.81	2.52	2.87	2.66	3.20	1.88	2.44	2.33	2.73	3.80	2.21	2.31	3.54	2.67	2.92	
HIGH OR LOW	H	H	L	H	L	L	L	H	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	H	L	L	6H 12L
AGE 30-39 MEAN	4.28	3.71	2.97	4.54	3.12	3.05	2.50	3.74	3.08	3.31	3.32	3.57	3.96	2.93	2.65	3.85	3.15	3.68	
HIGH OR LOW	H	H	L	H	L	L	L	H	L	L	H	H	H	L	L	H	L	H	9H 9L
AGE 40-49	4.51	3.65	2.70	3.92	2.48	2.49	2.20	2.95	2.76	2.89	3.06	3.02	3.76	2.50	2.28	3.78	2.64	2.94	
HIGH OR LOW	H	H	L	H	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	H	L	L	H	L	L	5H 13L
AGE 50-59	4.53	3.14	2.60	3.95	2.36	2.51	2.08	3.19	2.46	2.89	3.46	3.23	3.78	2.32	2.36	3.67	2.67	2.94	
HIGH OR LOW	H	H	L	H	L	L	L	H	L	L	H	L	H	L	L	H	L	L	7H 11L

OTHER STRESS SURVEYS

Comparisons and contrasts can be made with the Stress/Burnout Survey conducted by the Worcester Public Schools and the following three surveys conducted in New York, Washington and Massachusetts.

All of the surveys listed "Discipline" as one of the six high stress factors. Reduction in force was the only high stressor (top six) unique to Worcester. Each survey conducted had at least two job factors listed as a high stressor that could be compared to Worcester's overall response (See Tables 6, 7, 8, 9 Overall Response – Job Factors Listed).

The following is a brief summary of high stressors listed in each of the three surveys mentioned and some of the solutions that were given by the committees responsible for the survey. (New York did not give solutions).

The New York State United Teacher Stress Survey conducted in May, 1979 found that the six most stress producing job factors (scale 1 = low stress to 5 = high stress) were:

	($\bar{X}$ = mean)
Managing Disruptive Students	$\bar{X} = 3.9$
Incompetent Administrators (Lack of Administrative Support	$\bar{X} = 3.7$
Maintaining Self Control when angry	$\bar{X} = 3.3$
Overcrowded classrooms	$\bar{X} = 3.2$
First week of school	$\bar{X} = 3.1$
Disagreeing with supervisor	$\bar{X} = 3.1$

The New York Survey also found that the 31-41 year old teachers appeared to be under the greatest stress, with the 41-50 year old teachers reporting only half as many items as stressful and teachers over 50 reporting even fewer items.[1]

Forty-one percent of the teachers surveyed indicated they had experienced illnesses related to stress they felt in the classroom (i.e. headache, stomach problems, fatigue, high blood pressure, insomnia, anxiety and depression).[1]

Tacoma, Washington issued an analysis of their stress survey conducted in May, 1979. Approximately half of their staff responded (747 out of 1500). Participants were asked to rank order job factors by their perceived severity (high stress levels). The top six were:

1. Involuntarily Transferred
2. Notification of Unsatisfactory Performance
3. Colleague Assaulted in School
4. Managing Disruptive Students
5. Disagreement with Supervisor
6. Overcrowded Classrooms

The top twenty stress events were categorized within three headings:

1. Communications within building and district management
2. Classroom management
3. Personal safety and welfare

Using these three categories the committee made the following recommendations:

[1] *The New York State United Teacher Stress Survey*, November, 1979.

Category I – Communication

1. Involuntary transfer appears to be the event considered most stressful. (Chicago's study found the same.) The committee understands that not all involuntary transfers can be avoided; however, certain steps can be taken to limit the amount of stress in this situation. We recommend:
   a. That those being involuntarily transferred should be notified as early as possible, preferably before the close of the school year.
   b. That those being transferred be notified at least two weeks before public notification.
   c. That those being transferred be consulted and the rationale for the transfer be shared with them. They should know the reasons for being transferred in/out of a position.
   d. If at all possible, the transfer's choice should be considered.

Category II – Classroom management

1. Inservice training should be tailored to meet the specific needs of the teachers and presented in a way that it can best be utilized. (Much past inservice training has apparently occurred without planning, resources, or incentive for incorporating it into daily activities.) This is wasteful to the district and staff involved, as well as unproductive and frustrating.
2. Education of students with special needs requires special resources and special assistance for teachers. Provision of these resources and assistance will ensure better education for all students and less stress for their teachers and specialists.

Category III – Personal safety and welfare

1. The District should find a "workable form" on violence. The committee developed a form which could be modified in consultation with those who will have to fill them out.
2. Staff and administration at the building level must be made aware of the form and the potential value of the data generated from it, and strongly urged to report incidents immediately. When these events occur and are reported, they should be taken seriously, investigated and resolved.
3. The data from these reports should be analyzed periodically, and steps taken to deal with problems that are discovered.[2]

The Massachusetts Teacher December, 1979 published the results of their Stress Survey in which 300 respondents (population = 450) answered questions. The top six job related stressors for all personnel were:

1. Increased paperwork
2. Disruptive students
3. Lack of preparation time
4. Public pressure
5. Limited income
6. Lack of decision making opportunities

The committee indicated that some of the major stress factors were almost entirely beyond the control of an individual teacher. Some solutions may well include; communication workshops, training selected personnel in local associations in methods of dealing with stress; improving the public image of teachers; working with school committee and superintendents to find solutions; counseling and training of teachers for alternative careers; developing new kinds of teacher leave; and using suggestions from industry.[3]

[2] *The Report of Stress Conditions Within Tacoma Public Schools*, May, 1979.

[3] *Teacher Stress* The Massachusetts Teacher, December, 1979.

WHAT'S BEING DONE?

The Business World

Distress is rampant in our society. Some is job related; some is not. Non job related stress can, however, affect our on-the-job performance and job related stress can affect one's home life.

Many industries are aware of the benefits of caring and feeding employees psyches. According to a N.Y. Times article, U.S. Steel, Standard Oil of Ohio, CNA Insurance and Iowa Bell Telephone along with trade unions and government agencies have hired professional social workers to counsel employees on problems including difficulties with spouses, conflicts with superiors, aging parents, credit payments, housing and day care and how to apply for Medicaid.

The Polaroid Corporation in Cambridge has operated a counseling department for close to 20 years. This department pursues two main objectives: to assist the Polaroid members in solving problems which tend to lend imbalance to individual well-being and restrict the ability to function and develop; to assist the corporation in sensing human and organizational stresses and joining in corrective efforts.

The Education Profession

There have been many articles in professional journals recently that describe how individual teachers deal with stress. Some school systems and teachers' associations are doing things to help prevent or manage stress.

Cambridge, Mass. has established a teacher support team consisting of three faculty members and a consulting psychologist to help teachers to adjust to personal and professional pressures. The Montgomery County (Md.) Public Schools have an Employee Assistance Program that works with employees and their families who have problems which can and frequently do affect their job performance. The Pinellas (Fla.) Classroom Teachers' Association has established a stress hotline for teachers. Many conferences and workshops are being offered dealing with the problem. For example, the MTA offers a group counseling program entitled "The Personal Art of Stress Management."

What's being done in Worcester? The committee responsible for this report was formed as part of a Staff Development Day Meeting on Teacher Burnout. The Office of Staff Development has also offered Staff Development Day sessions on Stress and Transactional Analysis, as well as, stress workshops for secretaries at C.A.B. and for parents and teachers at Worcester East Middle.

In the fall Staff Development will offer inservice courses in Stress Prevention and Management, Clinical Supervision and Career Awareness. After school workshops will also be offered to individual schools on the topics listed above as well as How to Create a Support Team. Interested individuals can call the Office of Staff Development for further information.

Finally, a Teacher Center Committee was formed with the assistance of the E.A.W. This committee has submitted a proposal to the federal government for funds to establish a Teacher Center in Worcester. The focus of this center would be on stress and its related issues and would be open to all personnel in our system.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The following are comments made by respondents to the Open Ended Statements. These comments are not categorized in any particular fashion, however, they do give an indication of the types of concerns/solutions given by almost half of our population.

"I think the recognition of the problem is a real step in the right direction and gives people the feeling that someone wants to listen. I like teaching and children. My only problem seems to be enough time to correct paper, check homework, etc."

"Positive feedback for a job well done."

"Ways to increase cooperation and companionship among teachers should be developed. As we get to understand each other we will become more supportive of others throughout the system. Classes in physical exercise should be developed."

"Juggling the many different roles of a classroom teacher; cleaning room, planning, organizing materials, creating materials, maintaining records, paperwork, the act of instructing, disciplining, public relations with parents, decisions on problems and making referrals, keeping up to date on new theories, making personal contacts with students, dealing with special problem students."

"I see a great deal of stress result from lack of communication between departments (e.g. special ed. versus regular ed.) The classroom teacher is still the person who provides for the needs of the children and answers to parents and administrators no matter how many 'special area' teachers are involved. I'd like to see some help for the regular classroom teacher."

"Try to solve some of the existing building problems – committee to study and present problems in each school. Policy to implement solutions in each school. Establish non-smoking areas for teachers with respiratory problems who cannot go into regular teacher areas. Establish in-house teacher grievance committees to deal with administrative failure to support teacher related problems."

"Counseling must be available. Teachers need to develop a more positive self-image. Alcohol and drug abuse must be dealt with. Whatever is done, confidentiality is a key. Need for more concern and support for teachers by administrators . . . There should be leaves provided for mental health purposes with a portion of salary provided. Early retirement."

"Any services to be provided should have guaranteed confidentiality at the request of the participants to encourage their use by persons who might fear administrative reprisals for being 'weak' or 'flawed' teachers for having to use the service."

"Suggestion boxes in the schools to be collected periodically and read by Staff Development. Award night for best curriculum ideas/plans of year. Teachers should have some motivation like this to aim for. More team teaching to avoid isolation effect. More input into policy making and decisions about curriculum, books, etc. Weekly newsletter about programs, people, happening in the system."

"The School Committee should recognize the severity of the problem and begin to deal with it. Many fine teachers are leaving the system because of the stress related factors and this should be dealt with for the good of the Worcester Public Schools."

"A support team would be effective provided its members are carefully selected, are fully aware of conditions at work, are genuinely interested, are able to be objective and confidential and have some authority to resolve some of the concerns."

"There needs to be a consciousness raising of areas that must change if the American dream of 'equality' is to be achieved."

"Rarely does a teacher hear a word of appreciation. A little praise would help once in a while."

"Show people that others share and care about stressful problems."

(Clerk) *"The administrator I work for is a wonderful person, does not waste a minute of the working day. However, during the past month my work load has doubled, and the Director is not aware of how time consuming each additional job is and, added to my other duties, does affect my nerves. I have worked for one Director in one department and thought I could handle that fairly well – but since the Director's workload has doubled – so has mine. I'm sure the Director's salary has increased due to the increase in duties – but I know my salary has not."*

"Being a kindergarten teacher there is little free or planning time (30 minute library period every week). Just trying to get things done can really get to you. Now with more working mothers just trying to juggle things around can lead to problems. In my case the anxiety and stress caused a heart problem which is physiological in nature so treatment is by tranquilizers and a recommendation to learn to relax by TM or some other method."

"Preparation time and/or free time is little or nil at school. It's frustrating to have so much work to do at home. I have the problem of either putting myself on a guilt trip or causing myself stress when/if I am not as prepared as I want to be, yet I get disturbed to think I have to do it all at home."

"When substitutes are not sent, loss of preparation time and increased student load creates stress."

"How does a teacher leave the classroom stress situation and not bring it home to her family. Some days you go home feeling totally drained physically and mentally."

"Teachers who have served 20 or more years and who are suffering from Burnout should be allowed to retire at full retirement benefits earned even if they have not reached the 'retirement age.' I've seen several cases personally where good teachers are in situations where they cannot function and are too old to go into another field and too young to retire. These people need the most help and now before they have a complete mental or physical breakdown."

"EAW supported small groups for weekends away involving educators from all levels for encounter type training so that educators can deal with their feelings in constructive ways."

"Traveling from class to class and trying to individualize causes a lot of stress. Team vs. enrichment teachers-dichotomy causes a lot of stress (1st vs. 2nd class citizens). Large classes with too many special needs students. (class of 27 with 6 special needs students). One administrator is not supportive of discipline problems – in fact, his solutions have an adverse effect."

"Colleague indifference. Political pressure. Parental indifference."

"Teacher morale could be improved by emphasizing the importance of the contribution to student learning and growth. Mutual support by community and school staff could minimize stress caused by the rudeness of the students and public statements disparaging teachers' work."

"I feel I can speak for many teachers who, like myself, are concerned with each and every student as a total human being. However, many parents expect us to solve problems above and beyond the demands we feel responsible for."

"Opportunities for change in subject or level of teaching. Opportunities for merit recognition in the form of "Master Teacher" title or something to reward extra effort."

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There are, of course, many books and articles on stress and stress prevention and management. The following are some suggested readings:

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Joane Alinovi – *Midland Street School*
Eugene Applebaum – *Supervisor of Programs Development*
Sharon Barry – *Union Hill School*
Peter Blanchard – *Burncoat Junior High School*
Barbara Boschert – *Acting Director of Staff Development*
Kathy Brunelle – *Elementary Guidance Counselor*
Len Campbell – *Forest Grove Junior High School*
John Caparso – *Forest Grove Junior High School*
Mary Carney – *Elementary Guidance Counselor*
Richard Connole – *Nelson Place School*
Robert Consolmagno – *Director of Guidance*
Jeanette Davis – *Gage Street School*
John Dorsey – *North High School*
Maria Dziczck – *Woodward Day School*
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Richard Ferguson – *Alternative Programs*
Marion Giacomelli – *On leave*
Geraldine Girard – *Burncoat Elementary*
Ed Gustafson – *Forest Grove Junior High School*
Harold Hedberg – *Harlow Street School*
Kay Jeanette – *Forest Grove Junior High School*
Bob Johnson – *Gates Lane School*
Charles Korsun – *North High School*
Paul Loughlin – *Forest Grove Junior High School*
Joanne Maynard – *South High School*
Bob Mentzer – *Providence Street Junior High School*
Louise Monfredo – *(now retired)*
Jim Murphy – *Harlow Street School*
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James J. Collins
Barbara Ann Masley
Staff Development Office